

VIRGINIA
COMMISSION
for the



November 9, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Virginia Commission for the Arts
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**VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS
AWARDS \$40,000 TO VIRGINIA
COMPOSERS AND WRITERS**

RICHMOND, VA - The Virginia Commission for the Arts is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2007-2008 Artists Fellowships. Fellowships are awarded annually to artists residing in Virginia in recognition of creative excellence and to support their pursuit of artistic excellence. This year, eight Virginia artists have been honored in the fields of composition and poetry. The awarded artists will each receive fellowships of \$5,000.

Fellowships in *Poetry* were awarded to:

Lesley Wheeler of Lexington: PhD in English, Princeton University. Chair of the English department at Washington and Lee University where she has been teaching English since 1994. Forthcoming publication includes a book of poetry entitled *Scholarship Girl*. She has received numerous grants and awards including a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship.

David Wojahn of Richmond: Educated at the University of Minnesota and the University of Arizona. Professor of English and Chair of the Creative Writing program at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is also a member of the program faculty of the MFA in Writing program of Vermont College. He has published seven books of poetry. He was most recently a finalist of the Pulitzer Prize and winner of the O.B. Hardison Award from the Folger Shakespeare Library. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts among others.

Jennifer Chang of Charlottesville: PhD in Poetry Candidate, University of Virginia; MFA Poetry, University of Virginia. Teaching Assistant at the University of Virginia where she is receiving her PhD in Poetry. Her first book of poetry is currently being published. She has received many grants and awards and her work is regularly published in a variety of poetry journals.

Melanie Almeder of Roanoke: PhD in contemporary fiction, University of Florida; MFA in Poetry, University of Massachusetts. Has been teaching poetry and fiction at Roanoke College since 1999. Regularly receives grants, awards and honors. Recent book of poetry includes *On Dream Street*. Almeder's poems have been widely published in a range of journals. She has been nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize.

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Fellowships in *Composition* in classical music and jazz were awarded to:

Ashby Anderson of Richmond: BA.in Music Education, Virginia Union University. Founder and director of the Jazz Composers Alliance. He has three recordings released since 1999. In 2005, Meet the Composer commissioned “The Historic Richmond Jazz Suite.”

Benjamin Broening of Richmond: PhD in Music Composition and Theory, University of Michigan; M. Phil. Music Composition, Cambridge University, Christ’s College; MA Music Composition, Yale University. Associate Professor and Director of Music Technology, University of Richmond. Recipient of prestigious awards and fellowships including most recently a Fulbright Award. His music has been recorded on 8 CD’s. His work is regularly performed on nationally as well as international stages.

Judith Shatin of Charlottesville: PhD in Music Composition, Princeton University; MA Music, Julliard School. Professor of Music at the University of Virginia and Founder & Director of the Virginia Center for Computer Music. She has received four Composer Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, two from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and five from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, among others. Her pieces are performed all over the world.

Dan Visconti of Arlington: MA in Music, the Cleveland Institute of Music. Adjunct Composition faculty member of the Cleveland Institute of Music and Case Western Reserve University. Recent awards include the Columbia University Beams Prize in Composition and a grant from Meet the Composer and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Recent commissions have come from the Kronos Quartet, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Annapolis Symphony, the Albany Symphony, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony, Antares, the Corigliano Quartet, and the Janaki Trio.

Artist Fellowships are offered on a rotating basis to Virginia artists in the following disciplines: crafts, photography, sculpture, fiction, music composition, choreography, painting, works on paper (prints and drawing), poetry, playwriting, and filmmaking depending upon the amount of state and federal funding available to the Commission.

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is the state agency that supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission distributes grant awards to artists, arts and other not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators and local governments, and provides technical assistance in arts management.

For information about the Virginia Commission for the Arts or its programs or resources, contact: The Virginia Commission for the Arts, 223 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219; 804-225-3132; or visit our website at www.arts.virginia.gov

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